

ELECTION

In order to comply with the Examiner's Restriction Requirement, Applicants provisionally elect, with traverse, to prosecute Group I, directed to claims 1-9, for prosecution in the present application. Applicants reserve the right to file a Divisional application directed to the non-elected claims at a later date, if so desired.

This requirement for restriction is respectfully traversed for the reasons set forth below.

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner has failed to meet the required burden of showing that the groups of claims are independent and distinct, as required by law. 35 USC §121 specifically states that the Commissioner may require the application to be restricted if it contains two or more "independent and distinct" inventions claimed in one application. 37 CFR §1.141 and §1.142 further repeat the language that the two or more inventions must be "independent and distinct".

MPEP §802.01 provides specific definitions of the meaning of the terms "independent" and "distinct". MPEP §802.01 states that the terms "independent" and "distinct" do not mean the same thing, but in fact have very different meanings. The term "independent", as set forth in MPEP §802.01, means that

"there is no disclosed relationship between the two or more subjects disclosed, that is, they are unconnected in design, operation, or effect". The term "distinct" means that "two or more subjects as disclosed are related, for example, as combination and part (sub-combination) thereof, ... and are patentable over each other".

The Examiner has set forth various reasons why the inventions are "distinct" from one another, by providing separate classifications for the groups, and by stating reasons why the groups are related. However, the Examiner has not met the burden of proving that the groupings are "independent" as required by the United States Code, the Code of Federal Regulations, and the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure.

Accordingly, in view of the above remarks, reconsideration of the requirement for restriction, and an action on all of the claims in the application, are respectfully requested.

Favorable action on the present application is earnestly solicited.

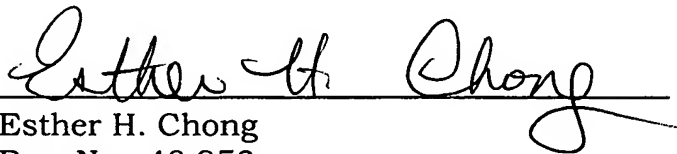
If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone Esther H. Chong Registration No. 40,953, at (703) 205-8000, in the Washington, D.C. area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit

Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By: 
Esther H. Chong
Reg. No.: 40,953

EHC:cms

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000